INTRODUCTION: WHY A MEN’S SEDER?

“When I sit down in a public place, beside a swimming pool, or at a park, I relax and feel good if there is no one else around. If another man arrives, I first run a check that he is no physical threat – that he is not about to mug me. No one has ever mugged me or hurt me or even picked a fight with me since 4th grade, but the feeling is there. Then I get to assessing whether he is stronger, has better clothes, or is more athletic, in better shape, how do I match up? If he has a woman with him, I try to figure out what she sees in him, if she is good looking I question her motivation. If the parking lot is within view, I check out his car for comparison with my own. Even if he is friendly and a conversation starts, I have to fight the urge to mention my achievements, what an important person I am – to subtly start winning the contest. In inner competition never stops – I seem caught in a basically hostile and insecure obsession with comparisons.” Source: Manhood: An Action Plan for Changing Men's Lives by Steve Biddulph 1995

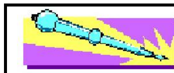
Tonight, this Seder is about retraining ourselves to change this damaging and isolating pattern. Teaching ourselves to see other men as brothers, tonight we are searching for our brothers, tonight we are safe in the company of men, tonight we are our brother’s keeper. Together as Jewish men we strive to free ourselves from the thoughts and practices that enslave us and to embody the blessing:

Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the universe, who has made me to be a free man.

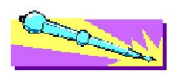
בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם שֶׁעָשַׂנִי בֶּן חוֹרִין.

Baruch ata Adonai elohënu melech ha-olam she-asani ben horin.

Meet the Men at Your Table:
Carl Jung once observed that men and women have different distinctive traits. A man's sense of value, his identity, and his major choices in life all aim at accomplishing something: achievement. Women, on the other hand, are relational, driven toward connection, nurture, sharing and supporting. He observed that around age 40 men experience a shift in perspective, men who have worked hard all their lives to fulfill their masculine perspective (achievement) become slowly aware of what might be called the missing feminine side (relationships) and begin to regret its absence in their lives. This regret is best described by one word, loneliness, and is expressed in the question, who do I really know?



When you see this symbol it means you're supposed to do something, or to pay attention. Imagine how life would be different if everytime we had to do something or pay attention we were given a sign? (Probably best to hide this sign from your spouse or boss.)



Before we go any further introduce yourself to the people at your table, but don't say what you do for a living. We are not defined by our jobs, careers or achievements. Who are you beyond how you make a living?

Kadesh קַדֵּשׁ

To 'make kiddush' is to declare a moment to be holy. It is to invite God in to the most intimate of experiences and to recognize that something extra ordinary is taking place. It is our sincere hope that this seder is holy as well, that as we raise our glasses and sanctify this gathering of brothers we invite God in - into this seder, into our relationships, into our lives.

Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the universe, who creates the fruit of the vine.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא פְּרִי הַגָּפֶן׃

Baruch ata Adonai elohënu melech ha-olam borë p'ri hagafen.

Blessed are You, Lord our God, who has created us as men, who has endowed us with physical strength and spiritual grandeur and who has bestowed upon us our unique categories of understanding and our gender-specific roles in life. Blessed are You, O Lord, who sanctifies our work and grants us our joy.

Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the universe, who has granted us life and sustenance and permitted us to reach this season.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, שֶׁהֶחֱיָנוּ

וְקִיְּמָנוּ וְהִגִּיעָנוּ לַזְּמַן הַזֶּה׃

Baruch atah Adonai elohënu melech ha-olam shehecheyanu v'kiy'manu v'higi-anu laz'man hazeh.

Urhatz וּרְחַץ

Washing the hands

The hands are washed without a berakha.

Karpas כַּרְפַּס

Dip vegetable in salt water

Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the universe, who creates the fruit of the earth.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא פְּרִי הָאֲדָמָה׃

Baruch atah Adonai elohënu melech ha-olam borë p'ri ha-adamah.

Yahatz יַחַץ

Breaking the middle matzah

The middle matzah is broken into two pieces; the larger piece is hidden away for the Afikoman.

Maggid מַגִּיד

Recite the Haggadah

Raising the matzot, the leader declares:

This is the bread of poverty which our ancestors ate in the land of Egypt. The fear of poverty is the bread men eat each day of our lives. At present we are here, in this anxiety; next year may we be secure. At present we are slaves; next year may we be free men.

Ha lachma anya di-achalu avahatana b'ar-a d'Mits-ra-yim. Kol dich-fin yëtë v'yëchul, kol dits-rich yëtë v'yif-sach. Hashata hacha, lashanah haba-a b'ar-a d'Yis-ra-ël. Hashata av-dë. Lashanah haba-a b'në chorin.

הָא לַחְמָא עַנְיָא דִּי אֲכָלוּ אַבְהָתָנָא בְּאַרְעָא דְמִצְרָיִם. כָּל דִּכְפִין יֵיתֵי וְיֵכוֹל, כָּל דִּצְרִיךְ יֵיתֵי וְיִפְסַח. הָשַּׁתָּא הָכָא, לְשָׁנָה הַבָּאָה בְּאַרְעָא דְיִשְׂרָאֵל. הָשַּׁתָּא עַבְדֵי, לְשָׁנָה הַבָּאָה בְּנֵי חוֹרִין׃

The Four Questions

מַה נִּשְׁתַּנָּה הַלַּיְלָה הַזֶּה מִכָּל הַלֵּילוֹת?

Why is this night different from all other nights?

- Why is it that because I am a Man I have to be the bread winner?
- Why was it so much easier to make friends when I was growing up?
- Why is it so important to me that I am still able to compete athletically at the same level I did when I was a teenager, even though my doctors and body tell me I can't?
- Why is it that no matter how old I get, I don't understand women?



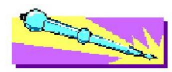
The Four Questions from the Traditional Seder do not change from year to year, but each year we come with new questions. Take an index card from the stack on the table and write the question you brought to this Seder this year? Place the card in middle of the Seder Plate.

Slaves to Technology

Rabbi Levi Yitzhak of Berditchev once observed a man hurrying along the street, look neither right nor left:

> *Why are you rushing so? He asked him. I am after my livelihood, the man replied. And how do you know, continued the rabbi, that your livelihood is running on before you, so that you have to rush after it? Perhaps it is behind you, and all you need do to encounter it is to stand still.*

Machines that were designed to care for us force us to care for them. Timesaving gadgets ring and beep, and we jump to do their bidding. Now that bodies, possessions and ideas travel faster than ever, our accessories turn us into their appendages, and the old struggle between person and creation grows ever more intense.
(Rabbi Dennis Ross: God in Our Relationships: Spirituality Between People from the Teachings of Martin Buber)



If you have a cellphone or pager take a moment to turn it off. How does it feel to be freed from this device? If you can't you can't turn it off because of some obligation to always be reachable by your work, your spouse, your family when, if ever, do you feel free? Take a moment and share your reflections with the person to your left.

The Torah speaks of four men:

a wise man, a conflicted man, a simple man, and one who is not able to ask a question.

The wise man asks: "What is the meaning of my life? For what do I live"



Write on a card what gives your life the most meaning and purpose.

Collect the cards, shuffle them and redistribute them around the table and read the answer on each card.

The conflicted man asks: "What does this service to my aging parents mean to me? And what claim do my children have on me? And how do my responsibilities to my parents affect my responsibilities to my children?"



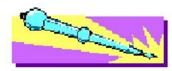
Write on a card what have you found to be the key to balancing the demands of being a son & being a father?

Collect the cards, shuffle them and redistribute them around the table and read the answer on each card.

The simple man asks: "Why am I here? Why did I come to a Men's Seder anyway, what am I hoping to get out of this experience?"

עֲבָדִים הָיִינוּ לְפַרְעֹה בְּמִצְרָיִם.

We were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt, not in control of our time or our labor, not masters of our destiny. And we are slaves even now to our modern day Pharoahs.



Discuss: What enslaves you most as a man? What would need to change in your life to move you closer to freedom?

Avadim ha-yinu, ha-yinu,
Ata b'në chorin, b'në chorin.
Avadim ha-yinu, ata, ata b'në chorin.
Avadim ha-yinu, ata, ata b'në chorin, b'në chorin.

בָּרוּךְ הַמָּקוֹם. בָּרוּךְ הוּא.

TO THINK ABOUT:
"For this is the journey that men make, to find themselves. If they fail in this, it doesn't matter much what else they find. Money, fame, position, many loves, revenge—all are of little consequence. And when the tickets are collected at the end of the ride they are tossed into a bin marked failure. But if a man happens to find himself—if he knows what he can be depended upon to do, the limits of his courage, the position from which he will no longer retreat … the extent of his dedication … then he has found a mansion which he can inhabit with dignity all the days of his life."

(James Michner, 'The Fires of Spring')

Write on a card why you came to this Seder and what you hope to get from it.

Collect the cards, shuffle them and redistribute them around the table and read the answer on each card.

For the one who is unable to ask

you must open up the subject to him, as it is written: “You shall tell your son on that day:...” What advice do you wish you had been given 20 or 30 years ago when you were just starting out as an adult man?

Write on the card the advice you wish you were given.

Collect the cards, shuffle them and redistribute them around the table and read the answer on each card.

On Being A Friend: Be first to greet your fellow man; invite him to your joyful occasions; call him by complimentary names; never give away his secrets; help him when he is in trouble; look after his interests when he is away; overlook his shortcomings and forgive him promptly; criticize him when he has done wrong; respect him always; do not deceive him; do not lie to him; pray for him and wish him happiness; attend to his burial if he dies. --Menorat ha-Maor

These are the Ten Plagues which the Holy One, blessed be He, thought to bring most devastatingly upon men. Each gender has its plagues; these are ours.

Beat your drum following the rhythm of the syllables of these plagues:

Prostate Cancer.
Heart Disease.
Diabetes.
Weight Gain.
Hair Loss.
Job Loss.
Impotence.
Arthritis.
Substance Abuse.
Premature Death.

Now find a rhythm that is comfortable for you. Add to this list with additional Plagues that beset us as Men, when you have a plague to add to the list call it out.

God has bestowed many blessings upon us.

What are the blessings in your life?

Take a card and make a list of the blessings you enjoy in life (these will not be shared). Place it in your pocket.

Bridge:
When you are down to nothing
And think your worth is zero
Look in the eyes of the ones you love
They're looking at a hero!!

Chorus:
Dayenu dayenu being a man shouldn't be so tough
Dayenu dayenu enough is enough!

TO THINK ABOUT:
"It's not that Jewish men are *wusses*. It's that our code of masculinity is simply different. We demonstrate our masculinity through love of ideas and words, an infatuation with argument and intellectual striving. Some people think that to be a man you have to know how to go it alone. Not Jewish men. We live like men in the midst of a community, showing responsibility and living lives of interconnection. Some people think that to be a man is to 'do what you gotta do.' Not Jewish men. We show that we are men through a strict adherence to a moral code. It means lifting ourselves higher than we ever thought possible. To be a Jewish man is a celebration, a celebration of Jewish difference. Jews pray differently, study differently, eat differently, live differently. And if we are men, then we are men differently as well.
(Jeff Salkin, "In Search of My Brothers")

When can we as men finally say,
Dayyenu!! דַּיֵּנוּ!!!
When is enough really enough?

A Man's Dayenu © Mike Stein 2007
Verse:
What does it mean to have enough
When do we say dayenu
Why do we have to be so tough
Remove our hearts from the table

How can a job, a house and a car,
Give our lives meaning
Determine completely who we are
These things short-lived and fleeting

Chorus:
Dayenu dayenu being a man shouldn't be so tough
Dayenu dayenu enough is enough!

Verse:
Why can't we be content
With families to care for
Why do we think the things we own
Will make them love us more?

Top dog the boss a title
Look up and what do you see
That a dad a son a husband
Is all you need to be

Chorus:
Dayenu dayenu being a man shouldn't be so tough
Dayenu dayenu enough is enough!

Maror מָרוֹר

We eat this bitter herb because the Egyptians embittered the lives of our ancestors in Egypt.

What in our lives makes us bitter & angry?

בְּכָל־דּוֹר וָדוֹר In every generation we are given new challenges as men.

What are the unique challenges of our generation?

Rahtzah רָחְצָה

Wash the hands for the meal

נוטלים ידים ומברכים:

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ
בְּמִצְוֹתָיו, וְצִוָּנוּ עַל נְטִילַת יָדָיִם:

Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the universe, who hast sanctified us with Your commandments, and commanded us concerning the washing of the hands.

***Baruch ata Adonai elohënu melech ha-olam asher kid'shanu b'mits-votav v'tsivanu al n'tilat yada-yim*.**

Rabban Gamliel used to say: Anyone who has not discussed these three things on Passover has not fulfilled his duty, namely:

פֶּסַח. מַצָּה וּמָרוֹר:

Pesah, Matzah and Maror.

On the way home, and in the days following, think about how to bring these questions to your Sedarim.

Pesah פֶּסַח

Our ancestors ate the Passover Sacrifice during the period of the Temple.

What have you sacrificed to get where you are today? What are you willing to sacrifice to get where you want to go?

Matzah מַצָּה

We eat the matzah because God redeemed our ancestors before their dough had time to rise.

What things are you forced to do quickly, like making matzah, because you don't have enough time do them properly? What special things in our lives do we not have time for at all and wish we did?

Barekh בָּרֵךְ:

Grace after meals

ברכת המזון

המזמן: רַבּוֹתַי נְבָרֵךְ!

Leader:
Rabotai n'varëch.

Guests respond, then Seder leader continues:

המסובין: יְהִי שֵׁם יְיָ מְבֹרָךְ מֵעַתָּה וְעַד עוֹלָם.

המזמן: יְהִי שֵׁם יְיָ מְבֹרָךְ מֵעַתָּה וְעַד עוֹלָם.

Guests respond, then Seder leader continues:

Blessed be the name of the Lord from this time forth and forever.

All, then Leader repeats:
Y'hi shëm Adonai m'vorach më-atah v'ad olam.

בִּרְשׁוּת מָרָנָן וְרַבָּנָן וְרַבּוֹתַי, נְבָרֵךְ (אֱלֹהֵינוּ) שֶׁאָכַלְנוּ מִשֶּׁלּוֹ.

Leader continues:
Bir-shut maranan v'rabotai, n'varëch [elohënu] she-achal-nu mishelo.

Motzi Matzah מוֹצִיא. מַצָּה

Blessings over the matzah

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, הַמּוֹצִיא לֶחֶם מִן הָאָרֶץ:

Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the universe, who brings forth bread from the earth.

Baruch ata Adonai elohënu melech ha-olam hamotsi lechem min ha-aretz.

Shulhan Orekh שֻׁלְחָן עוֹרֵךְ:

Serve the meal

Tzafun צָפוּן

Partaking of the Afikoman

TO THINK ABOUT:
"Each life time is the pieces of a jigsaw puzzle. For some, there are more pieces. For others, the puzzle is more difficult to assemble. But know this: you do not have within yourself all the pieces to your puzzle. Everyone carries with them at least one piece and probably many pieces to someone else's puzzle. Sometimes they know it; sometimes they don't know it. And when you present your piece, which is worthless to you, to another, whether you know it or not, whether they know it or not, you are a messenger from the Most High."

Rabbi Lawrence Kushner

המסובין: בָּרוּךְ (אֱלֹהֵינוּ) שֶׁאָכַלְנוּ מִשֶּׁלּוֹ וּבְטוּבוֹ חָיִינוּ.

All, then leader repeats:
Baruch [elohënu] she-achal-nu mishelo uv-tuvo cha-yinu.

המזמן: בָּרוּךְ (אֱלֹהֵינוּ) שֶׁאָכַלְנוּ מִשֶּׁלּוֹ וּבְטוּבוֹ חָיִינוּ.
בָּרוּךְ הוּא וּבָרוּךְ שְׁמוֹ:

All:
Baruch hu uvaruch sh'mo.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, הַזָּן אֶת הָעוֹלָם כֻּלּוֹ בְּטוּבוֹ בְּחֵן בְּחֶסֶד וּבְרַחֲמִים הוּא נוֹתֵן לֶחֶם לְכָל בָּשָׂר כִּי לְעוֹלָם חַסְדּוֹ. וּבְטוּבוֹ הַגָּדוֹל תָּמִיד לֹא חָסַר לָנוּ, וְאַל יֶחְסַר לָנוּ מָזוֹן לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד. בַּעֲבוּר שְׁמוֹ הַגָּדוֹל, כִּי הוּא אֵל זָן וּמְפַרְנֵס לַכֹּל וּמֵטִיב לַכֹּל, וּמֵכִין מָזוֹן לְכֹל בְּרִיּוֹתָיו אֲשֶׁר בָּרָא. בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, הַזָּן אֶת הַכֹּל:

Baruch ata Adonai elohënu melech ha-olam hazan et ha-olam kulo b'tuvo, b'chën b'chesed uv'rachamim hu notën lechem l'chol basar ki l'olam chas-do. Uv-tuvo hagadol tamid lo chasar lanu v'al yech-sar lanu mazon l'olam va-ed. Ba-avur sh'mo hagadol ki hu ël zan um-far-nës lakol umëtiv lakol umëchin mazon l'chol b'riyotav asher bara. Baruch atah Adonai, hazan et hakol.

נוֹדֶה לְּךָ יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ עַל שֶׁהִנְחַלְתָּ לַאֲבוֹתֵינוּ, אֶרֶץ חֶמְדָּה טוֹבָה וּרְחָבָה, וְעַל שֶׁהוֹצֵאתָנוּ יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם, וּפְדִיתָנוּ, מִבֵּית עֲבָדִים, וְעַל בְּרִיתְךָ שֶׁחָתַמְתָּ בִּבְשָׂרֵנוּ, וְעַל תּוֹרָתְךָ שֶׁלִּמַּדְתָּנוּ, וְעַל חֻקֶּיךָ שֶׁהוֹדַעְתָּנוּ וְעַל חַיִּים חֵן וָחֶסֶד שֶׁחוֹנַנְתָּנוּ, וְעַל אֲכִילַת מָזוֹן שָׁאַתָּה זָן וּמְפַרְנֵס אוֹתָנוּ תָּמִיד, בְּכָל יוֹם וּבְכָל עֵת וּבְכָל שָׁעָה:

כַּכָּתוּב, וְאָכַלְתָּ וְשָׂבָעְתָּ, וּבֵרַכְתָּ אֶת יְיָ אֱלֹהֶיךָ עַל הָאָרֶץ הַטֹּבָה אֲשֶׁר נָתַן לָךְ. בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, עַל הָאָרֶץ וְעַל הַמָּזוֹן:

Kakatuv v'achal-ta v'savata uvërach-ta et-Adonai elohecha al ha-aretz hatovah asher natan lach. Baruch ata Adonai, al ha-aretz v'al hamazon.

וּבְנֵה יְרוּשָׁלַיִם עִיר הַקֹּדֶשׁ בִּמְהֵרָה בְיָמֵינוּ. בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, בּוֹנֵה בְּרַחֲמָיו יְרוּשָׁלָיִם. אָמֵן

Uv'në Y'rushala-yim ir hakodesh bim-hëra v'yamënu. Baruch atah Adonai, boneh b'rachamav Y'rushala-yim. Amën.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, הָאֵל אָבִינוּ, מַלְכֵּנוּ, אַדִּירֵנוּ בּוֹרְאֵנוּ, גּוֹאֲלֵנוּ, יוֹצְרֵנוּ, קְדוֹשֵׁנוּ קְדוֹשׁ יַעֲקֹב, רוֹעֵנוּ רוֹעֵה יִשְׂרָאֵל. הַמֶּלֶךְ הַטּוֹב, וְהַמֵּטִיב לַכֹּל, שֶׁבְּכָל יוֹם וָיוֹם הוּא הֵטִיב, הוּא

מֵטִיב, הוּא יֵיטִיב לָנוּ.

Baruch atah Adonai elohënu melech ha-olam, ha-ël avinu mal-kënu, adirënu, bor-ënu, go-alënu, yots-rënu, k'doshënu, k'dosh ya-akov. Ro-ënu ro-ëh yis-ra-ël. Hamelech hatov, v'hamëtiv lakol, sheb'chol-yom vayom hu hëtiv, hu mëtiv, hu yëtiv lanu.

מַגְדִּיל יְשׁוּעוֹת מַלְכּוֹ, וְעֹשֶׂה חֶסֶד לִמְשִׁיחוֹ לְדָוִד וּלְזַרְעוֹ עַד עוֹלָם: עֹשֶׂה שָׁלוֹם בִּמְרוֹמָיו, הוּא יַעֲשֶׂה שָׁלוֹם, עָלֵינוּ וְעַל כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל, וְאִמְרוּ אָמֵן:

Mag-dil y'shuot mal-ko, v'oseh chesed lim-shicho, l'David ul'zar-o ad olam. Oseh shalom bim-romav hu ya-aseh shalom alënu v'al kol-Yis-ra-ël, v'imru amën.

יְיָ עֹז לְעַמּוֹ יִתֵּן, יְיָ יְבָרֵךְ אֶת עַמּוֹ בַשָּׁלוֹם:

Adonai oz l'amo yitën, Adonai y'varëch et-amo vashalom.

Nirtzah נִרְצָה

Acceptance

TO THINK ABOUT:
Sam Keen tells of being helped by an older man friend while going through a painful divorce. This man told him, "There are two questions a man must ask himself: The first is, "Where am I going?" The second is, 'Who will go with me?" If you ever get these questions in the wrong order you are in trouble!" Most of us get the order wrong.

The Seder now concludes. Just as we were privileged to share with each other the issues we have in common,

Those which enslave us, and those which free us,

Those which demean us, and those which ennoble us,

So may we be granted acceptance of our lot in life - as Jews, as men, as Jewish men.

לְשָׁנָה הַבָּאָה
בְּנֵי חוֹרִין:

NEXT YEAR
MAY WE BE FREE MEN!

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